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St. J



*Jesus answered, Neither hath this Man sinned
nor his Parents ; but that the Works of God
should be made manifest in him.*

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in Ordinary to His Majesty ; now Lord
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L O N D O N :

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St. JOHN ix. 3.

Jesus answered, Neither hath this Man sinned nor his Parents; but that the Works of God should be made manifest in him.

THE Occasion of these Words may be seen in the foregoing Verses: *As Jesus passed by, he saw a Man which was blind from his Birth; and his Disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this Man or his Parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath,* &c.

For the right Understanding of which Answer of our Saviour's, we must first enquire into the Ground and Meaning of the Disciples Question; *Master, who did sin, this Man, or his Parents, that he was born blind?*

And the Ground and Reason of their Question seems to be an Opinion which they had entertained, That the good and evil Things of this Life were, by the Divine Providence, always proportioned to Men according to their different Deserts; and particularly, that whenever God sent upon any Man any sore and extraordinary Affliction, some great Offence or extraordinary Provocation was always the Reason of it.

And this indeed is an Opinion that is too generally received in the World, and is the occasion of those rash and uncharitable Censures, which People are too apt to pass upon others, from the Consideration of the evil things which they see do befall them in this Life.

They can hardly forbear thinking that Man, a great Sinner, whom they see very sorely afflicted, altho' they themselves know nothing that he has done amiss; nor perhaps ever heard any thing ill of him: But the Judgment of God, they presume is right; and they take it for granted, that he would not have inflicted such Punishment upon any Man, if he had not well deserved it.

So the Inhabitants of the Island on which St. Paul was Shipwrack'd, argued with respect to him, when a Viper out of the Fire had fastned on him; *Acts 28. 4. When the Barbarians*

barians saw the venomous Beast hang on his Hand, they said among themselves, no doubt this Man is a Murderer, whom, tho' he hath escaped the Sea, yet Vengeance suffereth not to live.

And thus also the Disciples seem to have thought, *viz.* That such a great Calamity as Blindness, would not have been sent upon any Man, but for some very great Fault; tho' what the Fault was, or where the Fault lay, they could not guess.

Had the Man been suddenly struck with Blindness, they would have made no doubt but that it was a Judgment of God upon him for some great Crime that he himself had committed; altho' they had not been able to name the particular.

But his Case was extraordinary, for he was born Blind; so that the Calamity was sent upon him before he could have done any thing to deserve it; And so what account to give of this, they could not tell.

But they seem to have heard of the Opinion of the *Pythagoreans* (Grat. in Loc.) which was embraced also by some among the *Jews*,) who held that there is a Transmigration of Souls from one Body to another; so that, consequently, every Man that is born into the World, had a Pre-existence in some former State. And if this Opinion were true, they could not tell, but that this Man's Blindness from his Birth, might be a Punishment sent upon him by God, for his Misbehaviour in that former State which he was in.

Or if not so; yet they remembered, that it was threatned in their own Law, that God would sometimes visit the Sins of the Fathers upon their Children. And so they could not tell but that this Blindness of the Child was designed as a Punishment to his wicked Parents, and that the Sin of the Father or Mother was, hereby, visited on their Son.

One or t'other of these, they took for granted, was the Cause of this Man's Blindness; *viz.* either that it was a Judgment of God upon him for the Wickedness of his Parents; or else, for some great Crime committed by himself, in some State that his Soul had formerly been in, before it was united to this Body: And therefore they came to our Saviour to be

resolved which of them it was. *Master, say they, Who did sin, this Man, or his Parents, that he was born blind?*

In Answer to which Question, our Saviour, wisely avoiding to satisfy their Curiosity in a Point that it was needless for them to know; *viz.* Whether the Soul has any Existence, or is capable of contracting any Guilt, before it comes into the Body; tells them that they had mis-stated the Case; that the Question should not have been, Whether this Man's Blindness was a Judgment or Punishment inflicted on him, for his own, or for his Parents Sin; But whether it was at all designed for a Punishment of Sin; Or, whether it was inflicted for some other Cause? for that the temporal Evils that befall Men, are not always for Punishment, but are sometimes designed for quite other Purposes; And that this last was the Case of the Man they had asked about. *Jesus answered, nether hath this Man sinned nor his Parents;* that is, it is not any extraordinary Wickndness, either in this Man, or his Parents, that was the Reason of his Blindness; *but it was, that the Works of God should be made manifest in him.*

The meaning of which last Clause, as spoken with a particular respect to the Blind Man, I take to be this; That he was therefore born blind, to give Occasion to our Saviour to exert and manifest his Power, in the miraculous Cure of such a Defect, or Imperfection in the Body of this Man, as by any natural means or Remedies that could be used, was altogether incurable; and thereby to give an undeniable Proof, that he was indued with a divine Power, and consequently that he was the *Messiah*. He was therefore born blind, that the Power of our Saviour should be manifested in him.

But as the Words may be generally understood, and applied to any other Case of the like Nature, the Meaning is this; That when any temporal Evil or Affliction befalls any Man, which is not designed for a Punishment of his Sin, and to make him an Example of the divine Vengeance: it is not however by any Oversight or Carelessness of Providence that he is so Afflicted; But that there is always some other good and wise End of Providence designed to be served by it. *Neither hath this Man sinned, nor his Parents;* that is, they have not either of them so sinned, as that he should be born blind

blind, for a Punishment of his own or their Sin ; *but* he was therefore born blind, *that the Works of God should be made manifest in him.*

From the Words thus explained, I shall take Occasion, very briefly, to do these two Things.

I. To shew that the temporal Evils which befall Men, are not always inflicted upon them as Punishments for Sin.

II. To shew what other wise Ends of Providence, the temporal Evils and Afflictions that befall good Men, do serve for.

I. I shall shew that the temporal Evils which befall Men, are not always inflicted upon them as Punishments for Sin. *Neither hath this Man sinned, nor his Parents,* that he should be born blind ; says our Saviour.

And what was true in his Case, is undoubtedly true in a great many others ; And the Holy Scripture it self furnishes us with several Examples of this kind. But that of *Job* being one of the most remarkable ones, I shall at present instance only in that.

Where, first of all, we may take notice of the Character that is given of him, by the Holy Spirit of God ; *Job 1. 1. That Man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed Evil.* So far was he from being a greater Sinner than others, that, on the contrary, there was none upon Earth, at that time, so good as he, *Hast thou, says God himself, considered my Servant Job, that there is none like him in the Earth Job 1. 8.* Certainly then, if any Man could even merit to be exempted, even from the common Miseries and Calamities of Humane Life, it was he. And yet it pleased God to order it quite otherwise ; And in him that Observation of the Wise Man was strictly verified, *That there be Just Men, unto whom it happeneth according to the Work of the Wicked. Eccles. 8. 14.*

For, if in the next place, we take notice of the Afflictions which befall this good Man ; I believe we may truly say, that there is no Example of any, the greatest Sinner that ever lived, that was so hardly dealt by, as he was.

Sometimes, indeed, a mighty Oppressor is forced to dis-

gorge his ill gotten Wealth, and is on a sudden, from the greatest Plenty, reduced to the most Miserable Want. Sometimes, again, a notorious Sinner, who escapes in his own Person, is punished very severely in his Children; and has his Punishment multiplied, by enduring, in the Misery of every one of them, whom he loves as himself, as much Pain and Torment, as he would do, if the Calamity that beset them had befallen himself. And again, The Punishments that are inflicted upon Men in this Life, by the divine Providence, are commonly single, either miserable Want and Poverty, or some painful Sickness, or noisom Disease, or perhaps a violent or untimely Death. And when any of these Evils befalls any Man we can scarcely forbear crying out, A Judgment! A Judgment! Surely this Man was a great Sinner, or else he would not have been so Afflicted!

What then should we have thought of a Man, in whom all these Miseries and Afflictions were united, as they were in *Job*? *Who was, one Day, the greatest of all the Men of the East, having seven thousand Sheep, and three thousand Camels, and five hundred Yoke of Oxen, and five hundred she Asses, and a very great House-hold; Job 1. 2. 1. 21.* and the next day was bereft of all his Substance, and left as *naked as he came out of his Mothers Womb; Job 1, 2. 4, 5.* who was, one Day, blessed with ten hopeful Children, who were very obedient to their Father, and very loving to one another; and the next Day, was deprived of them all at once, and that too, by a violent Death, by the Fall of an House upon their Heads. *Job 1. 19.* And it added not a little to the Greatness of these Afflictions, that they came all upon him suddenly, when no such Evils were foreseen, or could reasonably be feared; and that they happened all at the same time, the Messenger of one ill piece of News, having scarcely told his Tale, before he was succeeded by another, the Messenger of a worse. *Job. 1. 16, 17, 18.*

But hitherto he had suffered only in his Estate, and in his Children; but it was not long before he was brought to suffer likewise in his own Person; *Job 2. 6.* and that too in the worst Manner, that the Devil himself could devise; in such a Manner, as perhaps no other Man either before or since hath ever suffered; being *smitten all over with sore Boils, from the*

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sole of his Foot unto his Crown, Job 2. 6, 7. so that he had not one sound part in his whole Body.

And who would not have thought this Evil, especially when added to all the others aforementioned, a sufficient indication of God's high Displeasure against him? Who that had seen such a miserable Object, as he then was, would not have concluded, as his Friends then did, that all these Calamities were certain Expressions and sure Tokens of God's severest Vengeance upon him, for some great and crying sins, well known to God, although concealed from the World? Job 4. 7. *&c.* 8. 3, 4. 11. 6.

'Tis true indeed, all this while his own Life was spared; the Devil had no Permission from God to touch that; and he was not, as some notorious Sinners sometimes are, taken off by an untimely Death. *Job 2. 6.* But his Affliction was not the less, but much the greater for this; for though an untimely Death, to such as live in Ease, and Plenty, and Prosperity, and Sin, may be justly reckoned a Misfortune; yet most certainly, to such as are good Men, and yet are in extreme Want or Pain or Misery, it is a great Happiness to be delivered out of their sad and wretched state, tho' it be by Death. And so this good Man thought it would have been to him, and therefore, as patient as he was, could not forbear cursing the Day wherein he was born to endure such Misery, and heartily wishing for Death to put an End to it; *Job 3. 2. &c.* Wherefore, saies he, *is Light given to him that is in Misery, and Life unto the bitter in Soul? Which long for Death, but it cometh not; and dig for it more than for hid Treasures? Which rejoyce exceedingly, and are glad when they can find the Grave?* *Job 3. 20, 21, 22.*

Thus you see, that all those Miseries and Calamities of Life, which when they singly befall Men, are sometimes Acts and Expressions of the divine Vengeance upon them, for some great and crying Sins, did all together befall this good Man; of whom yet, in the midst of his Calamity; God himself gives this excellent Character, *Job 2, 3.* *And the Lord said unto Satan, hast thou considered my Servant Job, that there is none like him in the Earth, a perfect and an upright Man, one that feareth God and escheweth Evil? And still he holdeth fast his*

Integrity, altho' thou movest me against him, to destroy him without a Cause.

And this one Example alone, is, I think, a sufficient Proof of the first Point I was to speak to; which was to show that the temporal Evils which befall Men, are not always inflicted upon them as Punishments for Sin.

But the Day we are here met together upon, may likewise furnish us with another great Example of it, in our late gracious Sovereign King *CHARLES I.* And we should be injurious to his Memory, if we should not, now at this time, briefly reflect thereupon. Of whom we may say, as was said of *Job*, *That he was a perfect and upright Man, One that feared God and eschewed Evil*; for even his greatest Enemies, his wicked Murtherers, could not charge him with any Vice or Immorality; or even with any Frailty or Infirmary, but such as might be consistent with Integrity of Heart and Mind; And of whom, if we consider him as a King, we may, I think, truly say, (for what Profit can there be in flattering the Dead? especially One, whom a great many now adays make it their Business; and, I suppose, hope to find their Interest in it, to blacken and defame?) as was said of good King *Josiah*; *Like unto him, was there no King before him*: 2 Kings 23. 25. May there, after him, arise many like him.

A King, that could not by the softness of his Education, nor by the Ease and Plenty of a Court, nor by the many bad Examples that were ever before his Eyes, of those who had greater Restraints upon them than he had, be tempted to any Luxury, or Excess, or Extravagance in his way of Living.

A King, whom the Pleasures of Sense (of which he had, or might have had as great a share as any) could not make in love with pleasure, or fond of this World; and whom the Multitude of Cares and Business that attend a Crown could not make to neglect or omit his constant Exercise of Devotion.

A King that naturally cared for his Subjects, and pitied them as a Father does his Children; that readily condescended to any thing that he thought was for their good; and would have granted more than he did to them, if he could have done it, without betraying the Rights of the Crown, wherewith he was intrusted; and (which he valued more,) the Interest of Religion; and indeed rather than do either of these, he was con-

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rented to lose, not only his Crown from off his Head, but his Head too.

Such was the Saint of the Day, whose Memory we now celebrate, and whose Death we lament. A Sinner indeed we can't deny him to be, in the same Sense in which the Scripture says, *that all Men are Sinners*; Rom. 3. 23. and that *there is not a just Man upon Earth, that doth good, and sinneth not*; Eccles. 7. 20. But excepting only the Weaknesses of Humane Nature, and such slips and infirmities as the best Men are liable to; we may truly say of him, as was likewise said of *Josiah*, that *he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, — and turned not aside to the right hand, or to the left.* 2 Kings 22. 2.

And yet to this just Man it happened according to the Work of the Wicked; or rather, much worse. For tho' there have been many cruel Tyrants, and bloody Persecutors and Monsters of Wickedness, which have been made Examples to the World of the Divine Vengeance; yet hardly hath it happened even to the worst of them, so ill, as it did to this, the best of Kings, and the best of Men.

They have indeed, some of them, been overpowered by some Neighbouring Prince, displaced from their Government and driven into Exile; and they have, others of them, been risen up against by their own oppressed Subjects, and either slain in Battel, or else, being overcome, they have been deposed from their Kingly Power, shut up in Prison, and secretly Murdered; the just and wise Providence of God so permitting it to be: But in all History, I believe there is no Example paralel to this in every respect, scarcely any like it; That a Sovereign King, even while he was owned a King, should have an Army of his Subjects, levied in his Name, and as 'twas pretended, by his Authority, against his Person; That they that endeavour'd to depose and kill him, should yet give out that they were fighting for him; And that when they had got him into their Power, they should set up a Court of Judicature upon him, compos'd out of his own Subjects, who had sworn Allegiance to him; That there, they should formally Arraign and Try him against whom only Treason could be committed, for the Crime of High-Treason; and that at last they should proceed so far in their Hypocritical Impiety, as to pass Sentence of Death on him, from whom only the Judges of Life and Death could legally derive their Power; and to Execute, as a Villanous Malefactor, the Father of their Countrey, their rightful Lord and Sovereign.

The Evils that he suffered, considered in themselves, were as great as could well be endured; but the manner in which they were inflicted, and the Persons for whom he suffered them, were highly aggravating Ingredients in his Affliction; so that all things considered, perhaps no Man (our Lord and Saviour only excepted) did ever suffer more.

And now from these two great and notable Examples, I hope, we are sufficiently convinced, that the temporal Afflictions which befall Men, are not always certain Tokens of God's Displeasure; nor always designed for the Punishment of their Sin, upon whom they are sent.

And what we should learn from the Consideration of this Point, is, To beware how we pass a Judgment upon any Man, from what befalls him in
this

this Life; Because such Judgment; if it be not false, is, at the best, rash and uncertain; and *we cannot*, as the Wise Man says, *know Love or Hatred by all that is before us: for all things come alike to all, and there is one Event to the Righteous and to the Wicked.* * And tho' nothing comes to pass by Chance; and no Evil of any kind, ever befalls any Man, but by the Designation of the divine Providence; yet the very same Event, which to one Man is an Expression of God's Anger, to another Man may be an Instance and Token of his Kindness; and therefore, when we cannot certainly tell which it is, Charity obliges us to believe the best. * *Eccles. 9. 1. 12,*

And this leads me to the Second thing propounded; which was.

II. To shew what other wise Ends of Providence are served by the temporal Evils and Afflictions which befall Men. *Neither hath this Man sinned, nor his Parents, that he was born blind, but that the Works of God should be made manifest in him.*

And what was said of this Man's Blindness is as true of any other worldly Evil that at any time befalls any Man; If it be not intended for Punishment (as it is not always) there are some other Works of God that may be manifested thereby: some other wise Ends of Providence that 'tis designed for.

But in discoursing on this Head, it would be great Presumption to pretend to mention all the Ends of Providence, in any of its Dispensation; seeing *the Righteousness of God is like the great Mountains, Psal. 36. 6. and his Judgment are a great Deep, and his Ways past finding out. Rom. 11. 33.* Nevertheless there are two Ends of Providence, which are general; and which, I believe, we may say, are always designed in all the Afflictions of good Men, besides others which may be special and peculiar to some Cases, or which we may not have Wisdom enough to discern; *viz* 1, The spiritual Improvement of the Persons afflicted, whereby they will be intitled to a greater Reward in Heaven: And, 2. The Benefit of others who beholding their good Example may be thereby both directed and encouraged in the practice of those virtues which are proper to an afflicted state.

1. One End of Providence, in sending Afflictions upon good Men, is for their spiritual Improvement in Grace and Vertue, whereby they will be intitled to a greater Reward in the other World. For there is no man so good, but he may be made better, and there is no one State of Life, in which there is Opportunity of exercising all Vertues; And therefore tho' a Man be as perfect as any Man can be, in that State, wherein he now is; yet if he be called to another State and hath Trial made of him another Way, he may, and if he acquits himself well he will thereby be rendred more perfect.

And accordingly, 'tis observed by the Apostle, *Heb. 2. 10.* that even our Blessed Lord and Saviour himself *was made perfect through Sufferings;* and *Heb. 5. 8.* that *though he were a Son, yet he learned Obedience by the Things which he suffered.* And that this same is the Design of God in the Chastisement and Correction of all his Sons, we are told by the same Apostle, *Heb. 12. 10, 11.* *He chasteneth us for our Profit, that we might be Partakers of his Holiness.* And *though no Chastening for the present, seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable Fruit of Righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.*

And

And upon this Account the Holy Psalmist thankfully acknowledges the Kindness of God, in laying Afflictions upon him, *Psal. 119. 71, It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy Statutes.* And the Apostle exhorts us, *to count it all Joy, when we fall into divers Temptations; knowing this, that the Trying of our Faith worketh Patience; And let Patience, says he, have her perfect Work, that ye may be perfect and intire, wanting nothing.* Jam. 1, 2, 3, 4.

So that to what was said before, that temporal Adversities and Afflictions are not always Marks of God's Displeasure, we may now add this; that when they befall good Men, they are Tokens and Expressions of his Kindness. He means thereby to make them more perfect in Holiness, that so they may be capable of a more perfect Happiness; *these light Afflictions which are but for a Moment, Working for them a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory:* as the Apostle speaks, *2 Cor. 4. 17.* For the more they are tried, the more they will be refined and purified. And the greater Difficulties they are put to encounter, being enabled by the divine Grace to conquer them, their Victory will be so much the greater when they overcome; and their Crown will be so much the more glorious.

And therefore our Saviour pronounces a Blessedness to such as are reviled and persecuted; and commands his Disciples rather to rejoyce, than to be cast down, when such things happen to them, *Mat. 5. 10, 11, 12. Blessed are they which are persecuted for Righteousness sake; for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are ye when Men shall revile you and persecute you---Rejoyce and be exceeding glad, for great is your Reward in Heaven.*

And that this was one End and Design of Providence in the Afflictions of our late martyred Sovereign King *Charles the First*, cannot be doubted by those who reflect upon his Carriage and Deportment under his Afflictions.

An excellent Man, indeed, he was before; But nevertheless we may truly affirm, that he was much improved and bettered by his Sufferings. And of his Profiting under them, all they were Witnesses (not only his Servants, his Chaplains, his Friends; but even his Enemies) who attended him in his Restraints, and have given Testimony to the World of his Piety and Meekness and Patience and Charity. And that excellent Book* composed by himself, in the time of his Distresses, will, I suppose, be an everlasting Evidence thereof to after Ages, notwithstanding the Endeavours that have been formerly used by some to prove it spurious; and the Confidence of a late Author asserting it to be so, without either producing any new Evidence for the Proof of his Assertion; ‡ or offering one Word in Answer to those just and rational Exceptions that had been made before to those only Testimonies which he insists upon, to prove it a Forgery; or making any Exceptions to those later Evidences that have been produced to prove it Authentick.

* ΕΙΣΩΝ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΗ, or, *The Portraiture of his Sacred Majesty in his Solitudes and Sufferings.* ‡ *Life of John Milton, Printed 1699.* † *Vindication of K. Charles the Martyr, &c. 2 Edit. with Additions, 1697.* But

But (to use his own phrase) *We may cease to wonder that He should have the Boldness, without Proof, and against Proof, to deny the Authority of of this Book, who is such an Infidel as to doubt, and is Shameless and impudent enough, even in Print, and in a Christian Countrey, publicly to affront our Holy Religion, by declaring his Doubt, * That several Pieces under the Name of Christ and his Apostles, he must mean those now received by the whole Christian Church, for I know of no other, are suppositious; altho' through the Remoteness of those Ages, the Death of the Persons concerned, and the Decay of other Monuments wick might give us true Information, the Spuriousness thereof is yet undiscovered.*

And 'tis much to be feared that all your pious Designs and Endeavours to suppress Vice and Immorality (for which, if they succeed according to of the present Age, but of all Posterity too, which will inherit a Blessing, only of the present Age, but of all Posterity too, which will inherit a Blessing by your Means; 'tis, I say, much to be feared, that these your pious Designs and endeavours) will not have altogether so good an effect as might be wished; so long as the Foundation of all Revealed Religion is so openly struck at, and the publick Records and Evidences of our Christianity. are, without Controul or Censure, suffered to be called in Question; For if any of the *Pices* (as he calls them) *under the Name of Christ and his Apostles*, which are received by the whole Christian Church as Portions of divine Revelation, *are spurious and suppositious*, who can tell but that those which forbid Swearing and Drunkenness, and Fornication, and Adultery, and other abominable Lusts not fit to be named, are so, as well as those (which I suppose this Author chiefly aims at) which deliver to us the Doctrine of the Trinity, and other Articles of our Christian Faith? And therefore seeing the heavenly Doctrines, and the pure and perfect Precepts of Christianity are both *built upon the same Foundation of the Prophets and Apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner Stone*; if this Foundation be peck'd at and undermined, and so weakened, that one Part of the Building falls to the Ground, I doubt it will be impossible, by any Art, to uphold the other.--- But to return to my Subject.---

2. Another End of God's Providence in sending Afflictions upon good Men, is for the Benefit of others; who beholding their good Example, may be thereby both directed and encouraged in the Practice of those Vertues which are proper to an afflicted State.

This was probably the Reason of *Job's* Afflictions; This most certainly was one Reason why the History thereof, and of his Behaviour under them is recorded in the Holy Scripture; that by his Example others might be incited to the like Patience and Submission to the divine Will, under all the Adversities of this Life.

Nay this was, in part, the Design even of our Saviour's Sufferings, as we are told by St. Peter, 1 Pet. 2. 21. *Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an Example, that yeshould follow his Steps.*

And therefore, this also, we may reasonably think, was one End and Design of Providence, in the Afflictions of our late martyred Sovereign, whose Memory we this Day celebrate.

* *Life of John Milton, p. 91, 92.*

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For to excite Men to the Practice of difficult Vertues, there is need, not only of Precept to direct, and of Promise to stir up their Endeavours; but likewise of Example, to show them that the Duties commanded them are not impracticable; and thereby to encourage them to do their utmost, in an Assurance that their Labour shall not be in vain.

And the Example of Kings and great Persons being generally the most taken Notice of; and also, upon other Accounts more influential than the Examples of meaner Men; it was agreeable to the Goodness of God, and the Wisdom of Providence, to chuse him out for this purpose, that he might be an excellent Example to his own, and to all succeeding Ages, of all the Graces and Virtues, that are proper to almost every State and Condition of Life that Men can be in; And to this End, it was expedient that God should expose him to divers Temptations, and put him upon almost every kind of Trial. In all which he acquitted himself bravely, like a Man, and like a Christian.

For in his Prosperity, he was not high-minded; he did not trust in uncertain Riches; he did not forget God; he did not despise the Poor; he was guilty of no Excess in the Use of sensual Pleasures. So that in him, amidst the Glories of a Crown, and the Splendor and Plenty of a Court, you might have seen all that Humility, that Temperance, that Chastity, that Contempt of the World, that Mortification and Selfdenial, and that strict and regular Piety and Devotion, which might be expected, but is not always found even in a Religious Cloyster.

And yet in his Adversity, when it pleased God to make Trial of him that Way, he was no less an eminent Example of all the Vertues and Graces that are proper to that State. Indeed had he been always bred up in the School of Adversity, he could not have born his Afflictions better than he did; And this Consideration adds very much to the Excellence of his Example; because his Afflictions, as they were very grievous in themselves so they were also highly aggravated by their succeeding to a State of the greatest Plenty and Prosperity. For 'tis no such great Matter for a poor Man to be contented, if he was always poor, and was bred up hardly from the Beginning; Nor is it so much Commendation to a Man to bear any Affliction patiently, after he hath been a long while used to it; But the greatest Trial of a Man's Vertue, is in bearing well a great Change of his Condition for the worse; And when from Plenty he is reduced to Want; from great Prosperity, to miserable Adversity; from the highest Honour, to the vilest Disgrace; if then he acquits himself well, and bears this great Change of his Fortune with Meekness and Equanimity, he becomes an excellent Pattern to the World, of the most difficult and heroick Vertues.

Such therefore was that Prince whose Memory we now celebrate; Who was exactly the same in all Conditions; and shewed himself even at the first Trial, a perfect Master of all those Vertues which are suitable to an afflicted State, which others can scarcely learn after they have been long in it. Such was his Piety, that in every thing that happened to him, he meekly resigned himself to the divine Will; and chearfully submitted to whatever God was pleased to lay upon him, in a firm Belief that what God ordered was best. And such was his Charity, that he freely forgave the

rude Insolencies and Affronts of his own Subjects; even of those who had been, in a particular Manner, highly obliged by him; And he not only forgave them himself, but prayed earnestly to God, to forgive them too.

And this humble and dutiful Behaviour towards God, under the severest Trials; And this charitable and Christian Behaviour towards Men, under the greatest Provocations to Anger and Revenge, fully justified his Integrity, and perfected his Example; so that now, from the various Accidents both of Prosperity and Adversity which beset him, and his Behaviour under them, all Men, in all Estates, may be instructed in the Duties of their Condition; and, by the Pattern of such a great King, and such an excellent Man, may be encouraged to the Practice thereof. And if it had not happened to this just Man according to the Work of the Wicked, we should have wanted one of the most Excellent Examples of Piety and Vertue that ever the World produced.

And upon these Grounds, I suppose, it is, that the Church always celebrates the Memory of Martyrs with Joy and Gladness; nay, and keeps even the Days of their Martyrdom, as Festivals, not as Fasts; as Days of Rejoycing, not of Mourning; viz. partly, because of the great Advantage which the Church reaps from the Instruction and encouragement of their Example who have suffered for the Truth's sake; And partly, because those Days on which they suffered the worst of Deaths, were even to them themselves, the best Days of their whole Life; the Days which did put a Period to all their Miseries, and give them Admittance to everlasting Joys. And therefore the ancient Church, called them not the Days of their Death or Martyrdom, but their Birth Days; because they were then delivered out of an evil and troublesome World, and born again unto a new and endless Life of unspeakable Felicity; so that to them *the Day of their Death was, in truth, much better than the Day of their Birth* Eccles. 7. 1.

And upon both these Accounts, we also might very well celebrate this Day of the Martyrdom of our late Pious and Gracious Sovereign K. *Charles I.* as his Birth Day, and keep it as one of our highest Festivals; had he fallen, as the ancient Martyrs did, by the Hands of Infidels, or Strangers; or by any other Hands than our own. But this is our Unhappiness, and indeed a most just Cause of the bitterest Grief, and deepest Humiliation to us; that we can never think of his exemplary Piety and Goodness, without, at the same time reflecting upon our own great Wickedness; And that the more we admire his Vertues, the more we must condemn our Selves, through whose Iniquity it thus happened to him.

For tho' the Justice of God may be easily cleared and vindicated in suffering the best of Men, to be grievously afflicted, to be reviled and persecuted, and even to be barbarously murdered, by the Hands of the Wicked; tho', I say, these Dispensations of Providence, so far as they are the Acts of Providence, are both just in themselves, and ordained to wise and good Ends; this will by no means serve to excuse those wicked Men, who are the Means and Instruments of the Afflictions of the Righteous, because every Act is to be judged of by its self, and not by the Effects which
may

may follow from it, but are not the natural Consequences thereof. And if we may not do Evil, that Good may come; and our Damnation is just, if we do that which is Evil, tho' we design Good by it; as the Apostle Teaches, *Rom. 3. 8.* much less may we allow our selves to do Evil, only because God can bring Good out of it; and much more will our Damnation be just, if we do Evil with an evil Design, altho' God can turn our Injury into Good, to them to whom we meant it for Evil, or may otherwise so order it, that it shall produce very beneficial Effects to Mankind.

For who can think that the Persecutors of the Apostles and first Christians were the less to blame, because God, in his Wisdom, so contrived it, that the Blood of the Martyrs became the Seed of the Church, and the most effectual means of Spreading Christianity in the World? Or who will go about to excuse from the greatest sin that ever was committed, the Betrayers and Murderers of our Lord, because what they did, was what God himself had fore-ordained for the accomplishing the Redemption of Mankind? *Acts 2. 23. 4. 28.*

And therefore, by the same Reason; Altho' the sufferings of our late Martyred Sovereign did, without all Doubt, conduce much to his own spiritual Advantage, and to the increasing the Glory of his Celestial Crown; And He, by his pious Deportment under them, became an excellent Example to all others who are, or shall be called to the like sufferings; And while we consider these Advantages thereof, both to him and us, we may justly commemorate the same with Joy and Thankfulness; and might reasonably keep this, as we do the Days of other Saints with Feasting and Rejoycing; yet when we consider, on the other Hand, who were the Means and Instruments of his Afflictions; this opens quite another Scene, and brings a black Cloud upon this most glorious Day; and justifies the Wisdom of that Authority which has commanded us to keep it in a quite different manner, even with Weeping, and with Fasting, and with Mourning; because there is no Way to expiate a National Guilt, but by a National Repentance; For tho' it may charitably be believed, nay tho' it be certainly true, that there was not an actual consent of all the People (perhaps not of an Hundredth Part of the People) even of that Generation, to this Act of great Wickedness and horrid Barbarity, *by which the Protestant Religion hath received the greatest Wound and Reproach, and the People of England the most unsupportable Shame and Infamy; Stat. 12. Car 2. c. 30.* yet when 'tis consider'd, that it was done by those, who had then, by the Help and Assistance of better meaning Men, attained to an uncontrollable Power; and that it was done *under the Name and Authority of a Parliament;* (tho' the Party which called themselves so, and which passed the Ordinance for erecting that prodigious and unheard of Tribunal, which they called An High Court of Justice for Tryal of his Majesty were not a tenth Part of the whole) And when 'tis further considered that a great many of those, who did not give an actual consent thereto by their Voices, gave too great a consent thereto by their Silence. and by their not endeavouring in time to hinder it; The whole Nation, I fear, can hardly be thought guiltless.

Nay, and even we also who live now, so many Years after the Act is

done, may yet be justly thought to give too great a consent to it; and to be in some sort, Partakers with our Fathers, in the Guilt of shedding this righteous Blood; if we can speak of this Villainous Act, or of the Preparations to it, without Abhorrence; Nay more, If we do not heartily grieve and mourn at the Remembrance thereof; for if you look into *Ezek. 9. 4, 5, 6.* you will see that even in the Judgment of God himself; they which do not mourn for the sins of others, and especially for the publick Abominations that are done in the midst of the City or Nation to which they belong, are Partakers therein.

And besides, It may be also considered; That tho' we who live now, were not any of us of the number of those that were actually concerned in this villainous Act, of murdering the Lord's Anointed; being perhaps not then Born, or not of competent Age to be concerned in such Matters; yet 'tis an usual thing with God, (and what he has expressly threatened) to *vist the Sins of the Fathers upon the Children, and upon the Childrens Children, unto the third, and to the fourth Generation. Exod. 34. 7.* And if he sometimes does this, for private and personal sins; much more, may we reasonably think, he often does the same, for such sins as are publick and national; because tho' one Generation passes away, and another comes, the Nation never dies the Nation is still the same in this Age, that it was in the last, and will be the same in the next.

And this Threatning of God, I think, has been, in some measure, verified upon us. For we have already felt many strokes of the divine Vengeance, as we have great Reason to believe, upon this very Account. 'Tis reasonable, I say, to think this, because some of the Judgments which have befallen us since, have been the natural Effects and Products of this Days Wickedness; for such, I think we must all allow to be, those many Years of Anarchy and Confusion which immediately succeeded this bloody Tragedy; and also (to name no more) those dismal Fears and Apprehensions that we have since been in of Popery and Arbitrary Power; occasioned, in great measure, by the Expulsion of the Royal Seed and Education in a Foreign Country and Religion. **10 FEB 58**

That these will be the last Expressions of God's Anger against us for this great sin, we hope; but at the same time, we have much greater Reason to fear they will not, so long as all the same Wickednesses do abound which have drawn down those many heavy Judgments of God upon us which we have already felt; And we can have no reasonable Assurance that we shall not be punished yet seven times more for our Iniquities, unless now by a sincere Repentance, and a thorough Reformation of our Lives, and an unfeigned Humiliation of our Souls, and an utter Detestation of all such villainous Practices for the future, we endeavour to appease the Anger of God, and to move him to Compassion towards us.

This then let us do; and then let us Pray, as we are taught in our Litany, (and we may reasonably hope God will hear our Prayer) *Remember not, Lord, our Offences, nor the Offences of our fore-Fathers; Neither take thou Vengeance of our Sins; Spare us good Lord, spare thy People, whom thou hast redeemed with thy precious Blood; and be not angry with us for ever. Amen.* **F I N I S.**